

An
American
Dionysia

By

Χιρον Φιλογυνος
(Chiron Philogynos)

Note:

The following events are true. Nothing has been made up. Indeed every attempt has been made to preserve the accuracy of the record. Some minor incidents have been shortened, or left out entirely, for space and to keep the pace of the story. Some dialogue has been reconstructed. All names have been changed to protect the innocent. Except for two or three and those are minor characters and not very innocent anyway.

I.
Masochistic.

Maschocistic? Maybe. Fun? Certainly. For the end of the year Latin class toga party, I volunteered to be a slave, even though the teacher wanted me to be a senator. I walked into the room at the beginning of third period and asked about the burlap I brought in the other day. She had it ready and made up into a toga, or smock, or whatever it was that the slaves wore.

Burlap isn't the most comfortable material, especially in the hot Texas mid-May. My particular get up was light brown and covered my shoulders down to my ankles. I had more room in there than you'd think seeing me. After being fastened the teacher instructed me to go outside and "mill around" until the real show started.

I had a particular reason for wanting to be a slave. I wanted to be bought by Medea Bravo. In many ways, she had bought me already. She had come into my life earlier that year. We would causally meet each other in CMC, which is a kind of perennial study hall that qualified students could go to for quiet and some extra help. One day someone commented that she acted bitchy. Asked my opinion, I asserted that she was bitchy, but I thought it was sexy. She smiled, obviously flattered, and coyly placed her jeans-hugged bottom on the computer seat. She was always such a *femme fatale*.

As my relations with her improved, I soon concluded that she would be a prime candidate for prom. I planned early. The day before Valentine's Day she teased me with a vigor I hadn't seen before. I got into a mock confrontation with this guy over "little ol' her" By the end she was rubbing her pen across her lips, as I tried to talk to her. Surely I had this girl in the bag for prom.

But I didn't. Once I finally get a chance to ask her she proclaims she has a boyfriend. "You said you didn't have anyone to get a Valentine from," "Yes, we were having a fight, but we're back together now," And she walked up and kissed this guy right in front of me. For the time being she was out of the picture.

It must have been in early April when *it* happened. I don't know how it started but one day, in the more deserted room of CMC, she started giving me orders, which I volunteered for. Subtly understanding the nature of what we were doing, I asked if there was absolutely anything else I could do for her. "Yeah," she responded, "You could call this guy an asshole," pointing to someone in the more populated room. I did so, and after the appropriate slap on the risk from Ms. Narcissus, I go for the big one. "Is there anything else you'd like me to do... mistress?" The word came only barely, a few syllables, so that she knew what I was saying, yet with plausible deniability. I didn't need

it. From the moment the words sputtered out of my mouth I saw her smile almost maliciously. “You like it when I tell you to do things?” “Yes...” “Now, stop. Medea go back to the radio, Chiron go back to your seat,” “Yes, Ms. Narcissus,”

“Pppppppsssssss,” came from Medea on the other side of the room. “Are you a...virgin?” “What” “Come over here,” I sneak past the open door so Ms. Narcissus won’t see us. “Are you a virgin?” She demands coyly as she sits up right and cross-legged, with pale white skin and black cherry hair. I bend down on one knee, putting my face parallel to her horizontal leg. “Yes,” and then the bell rings and she skips off giggling.

Somewhere in all that morass she ordered me - at my suggestion that she order me to do something - she ordered me to hit this one guy for her. A few days later I chance by him and give him a token pat. I explain why I did and said that Medea rewarded me for doing stuff for her. “It’s all good,” he shrugged. Next week I finally catch up with her to get my “reward”. While coming in, late as usual, to first period I see her walking in the opposite direction with some guy. I caught up with her and told her that I had obeyed her order, and asked what my reward would be. We hadn’t formally agreed to rewards, but when I first did something for her, she token punched me in the shoulder, not hard, like a “good job, boy” punch.

“What do you want?” she purred.

“A kiss on the cheek?”

“Mmm, no,”

“A pet on the head,”

“No,”

We walk on a little longer.

“Want a Dorrito?”

I bend down and she feeds it to me by hand.

The next time I see her I assume that she is very “in” to what we are doing, but she seems somehow unenthused. The first couple of times she came into the backroom of CMC I stood at attention and lower my head; she seemed pleased, smiled menacingly and put her put her finger to her mouth “ssshhhhh.” When she finally got settled beyond the teachers sight, I walked up kneeled on one knee beside her and asked “Is there anything you want me, to do for you,” which was our code for my obedience. “Ergh, no,”

She said it in a low voice, not “Mmm, no,” but “Ehhh, no” “Are you sure?” I responded. “Yeah, just go over to your seat and leave me alone,” I pestered her all period, tried to talk with her about it, but she apparently didn’t want to play, though I think she became flattered by my persistence. After that, again, she was out of the picture.

But I had another idea. A cry for attention. A result of hormonal changes. A senior’s last shot at popularity. A stroke of genius.

II. Doughnuts?

Where do great ideas come from? Is it the simple recognition of two and two, and that they only need to be merged to become four? Is it a desperate grasp that chances by something solid? Is it revelation that the Almighty, it His infinite benevolence, has granted us his undeserving creations? I don't know what it is, but, like love, I know when it happens, and on April 17, 2003 it happened to me.

I was in Geometry when I suddenly remembered that today was the day we needed to start selling things for Mr. Quinn (medicine ball)'s Economics project. Thinking quickly, and cheaply and unoriginally, I asked if I could make a call and tell Mom to run and get some *Krispy Kreme* doughnuts. Wish granted. I got to the reception desk for the first of many times, and made my first sell to the secretary. What's the price? Again thinking quickly, and unimaginatively, "A dollar," She didn't seem to mind and bought a doughnut. I then ask two female student aides. Whence they refuse I respond, "That's OK you wouldn't want to lose those figures." They both blush and for the first time I realize this small rectangular white doughnut box could be a real chick magnet.

But what's the point of having a chick magnet if you don't get anywhere with the chick? The latter thought was almost like an echo of the former. When I come into the classroom with my new-fangled lodestar two girls on the route to my desk try to charm me out of my doughnuts. And they knew it too. Here was a lonely guy who had never really gone steady his whole high school career, if you only smile, talk sweetly, and look at him *that* way, you'll get what you want. But then you'll walk away and need not ever notice him again. And all the guy had to show for it was a look; he didn't even get a...

A little light bulb lit up in my head. It just might work. Near the end of class, when everyone just sits around talking, I take my white box and go up to the second girl, the blonde, who had so politely asked for a free doughnut, now sitting behind me at the back of the class. "How about this," I ask "I'll give you a free doughnut, but you have to give me a kiss,"

"Huh"

"It could just be on the cheek"

Immediately people start pressuring her to do it. She doesn't, but the offer stands, and I propose it to the other girl when she comes back. Though I don't "sell" any doughnuts there I still get noticed, and so another light bulb goes off, but in a different head. Even if I only get a few kisses, which would be a great perk, I could use this as a gimmick to sell my over-priced doughnuts. So I get a marker and write on the box – "Doughnuts, a dollar or a Kiss!"

Actually I just wrote “\$ or a kiss” but that’s what my business came to be called. With a few misgivings I went out into the hallway with my box and offered doughnuts to everyone who was passing by, particularly girls because they had broader paying options. I doubted seriously, though, whether I’d actually get any kisses. I liked the fun of it anyway. It was a way to have an amorous connection with a girl initiated, and mostly carried out, by myself; I had it all within my control. All they had to do was smile and be flattered, which they mostly were. Psychological rape? No, that’s deconstructing it too far. When I say control I mean it like I could have an amorous event any time I wanted, and direct it the way I wished. I think most girls would sympathize with that.

One of the girls I dare present my box too was Medea Bravo. In this case I actually stated my mantra “Doughnuts? A dollar or a kiss” she scolded me for some reason and asked how dare I charge her and kept walking...whatever. I then went to English class to pedal my wares.

Nothing much happened there. I was sent to CMC, as usual, where some guy tried to buy the whole lot for ten dollars. I was tempted, but wanted to see if I actually could get a kiss. When I went out into the courtyard for B-lunch I saw Medea again, and she called me over to her in a seemingly more amicable wise. I came over to her in the center of the court-yard and prostrated before her with a slight bow.

“You should give me one of those for free, because you’re like my bitch right?”

“Yes, milady” (Actually I don’t know if I said milady or mistress or ma’am, but it was some title of respect). I took out my doughnuts and obediently presented them to her

“You can have any one of them you want”

She looked over them condescendingly.

“You haven’t touched any of them right?”

“No, my lady,”

“Mmm, no, I don’t think I’ll take a doughnut today. Why is that one torn in half?”

“Someone wanted a 50 cent one, mistress, and didn’t buy”

“Looks disingenuous, you’ll never sell that one,”

So we chatted there a while with her cousin who had been with us the whole time. When the bell rings she orders her cousin to kiss me, and walks off; her cousin doesn’t kiss me. I guess I’m back in the saddle again with Medea. Or she is ...I’ve never really understood that saying.

I got my first kiss on that same courtyard a few minutes later by the lower steps. I offered a freshman girl doughnuts and she was genuinely interested in my alternative payment plan, more hungry than anything else. With a little encouragement from her dark haired friend, the dirty blonde came close to my cheek, as agreed, but couldn’t go on after I put my right hand on her shoulder. She stared giggling uncontrollably, quickly kissed the top of my left hand and ran off. I should tell you now that by this time I had been offering my customers a variety of payment options: a dollar- a doughnut; kiss on hand (girls only) – a doughnut; kiss on cheek (girls only) – a doughnut; kiss on lips (girls only) – a doughnut; any kind of kiss (boy) – I take doughnuts away from you.

This day was especially opportune as I soon found out. For it was the day that the PALS, a student club, were having their initiation rites. Before school all the prospective members were dressed up and painted by the incumbent members; Mardi Gras beads, face paint, shiny party hats, some kind of sash that they wore around their waist, they really went all out. One girl even had “kiss me” painted on her face. When all the members on one table belted a chant that I couldn’t make out, all the initiates on a nearby table yelled a customary response in unison. I asked an initiate about the ritual toward the end of school, “Oh, yeah. They dress us up in all this and ...uh, humiliate us basicallywe have to wear it all day at school. But it’s fun. Maybe you should join,” But I couldn’t. I only had a few more months of school left. I had never joined any club. I kind of wanted to be initiated in some way, though. I kinda wanted to be hazed, I guess.

Lunch was interesting. I advanced upon a group of the “popular” girls sitting at the forward table of the back section, which, unbeknownst to me, was the “cool” area of the cafeteria. And, of course, anytime a plebian like myself approaches these kinds of people with a proposition like this, they always play *quid pro quo*. This is an informal game when someone of the opposite sex tries to get you to do something in exchange for a future or prior concession on his or her part; kind of like truth or dare, except you have to dare. I’m not good at this game.

I was smart this time. First one of the girls bought a doughnut from me in cash (quid) then I had to go over to this girl on a different table and kiss her (quo). This is the typical kind of thing that you’re asked to do. This girl’s name ended up being Jaime by the way. So I went up to her, bent down to her level and...

“Hi, I’m Chiron Philogynos, proprietor of a small local retail doughnut business and to fulfill a recent purchase obligation I have to kiss you. May I do that now?”... or something to that effect. She looked at me odd and said no, whereupon I tried to kiss her without warning. But that didn’t work. After a while of trying to get her to let me kiss here on the cheek and hand she relented and said “You can kiss me on the foot” Yes! That had always been one of my most potent fantasies. The other was watching two chicks make out with each other in front of me, but I’m sure that’ll never happen.

So, in front of a large proportion of the senior class, I crouched down and pressed my lips against the bridge of her foot.

I got three more kisses that day:

i.) Immediately upon disengagement from the cafeteria I tried to sell doughnuts in the library, quietly of course. The first girl who was interested was studying at the hithermost table near the cafeteria entrance; though that wasn’t the one I came in through. She legitimately wanted a snack, I could sense her salivating at doughnuts when I showed

them to her, but didn't have any money. Well, you could kiss me. Do you want to see the doughnuts again? It could only be on the hand...hmm...well, all right. And she kisses me on the knuckles. I give her the doughnut, and after a slight hesitation,

"You know, I would of really of liked one the cheek," I say non-committally.

"Do you want one?" She has a gleam in her eye.

"Sure"

And that was my first sale.

ii.) Numero Dos of my kiss sales wasn't that spectacular. I met this one girl coming back from lunch and gave her my sales pitch. She didn't have any money. That wasn't a problem. Another kiss on the risk but I think if I had pressed harder I could have gotten more. Oh, well.

iii.) The last one though was a watershed. I was down to my last full doughnut, I had sold one of the half ones for a quarter to one of the guys at the end of the thither most table from the front. I had sold it by getting the rest of the table to start chanting "Do it, do it," because he thought the price was too high. I then came to this brunette and asked her if she wanted to buy a doughnut for every one there. Immediately the chant was up again, "do – it, do – it," but now it spread to the other tables, and almost all of the thither, yes, thither, part of the cafeteria was watching us.

"But I don't even like doughnuts,"

"Do it, do it,"

Soon she gave in to peer pressure, stoutly sat up and gave me a wet kiss on the lips. The crowd cheered. I held up my doughnut. The crowd cheered again. I felt like a teen movie hero.

III.

Terms of Estrangement.

All of these actions had deep psychological roots. A Freudian might say that I was actualizing my fear of self-effacement and inertia with a rapid succession of attention getting and sexually ebullient acts. Other factors could be brought up; turning eighteen and graduating from high school had given me impetus to self-reflection recently, and there where things I saw in the mirror that disturbed me. Finally, my hormonal glands had begun producing their peak amount of testosterone, a neuroactive chemical that increases, among other things, my sex drive. So, as Hegel might have put it, the historical forces were present to bring these events about, but how they would actualize, and their execution, would be up to the historical actors.

Sorry for breaking the chronology. Think of it as a twist, a third act revelation. So I was in Latin, thinking about a prom date. Latin was one of my favorite and yet most depressing classes, at least this year. The teacher was very lenient and most people socialized during the period. And, as illustrated by the fact they had even taken Latin, most were intellectuals. It was a perfect social opportunity, yet I was as distant as ever from my fellow classmates. What was wrong with me?

I decided to ask this girl, Karyn, out to the prom. It would just be as friends, we'd have a good time. But I chose a fatally inopportune time to solicit her for the dance. I had meant it to be discreet, but she needed to hear it. And she kept on talking to these other people who were getting in the way. Finally, my chance, the only time she wasn't distracted and she could hear me. But it was in the middle of a quiz, everyone could hear it, I could sense the amusement now buzzing throughout the room, I couldn't see her face (I was directly behind her) but imagined it was embarrassed. No. She was going with some friends.

Being an exemplar of my station in high school life, I asked again, just to be sure, that she had said no. More people grimaced. I kept from overreacting and went to the library. The library. I choose to go to the library rather than spend my lunch period with other people in the cafeteria. I felt it was like a symbol of my abdication. Should I start where I left off in the book I read while I'm in here? No, I don't want to have all this at my disposal and only use two books my whole high school career. I'll read... Dictionary of World War II; no, Encyclopedia of the Cold War; no, the Vietnam wars, uugh... why have I only chosen war books today?

After I finally had sold myself on a selection, I asked if I could sit down opposite a strawberry blonde at the above-mentioned table of the first doughnut kiss. After a while, feeling frustrated, feeling lonely, feeling ...God knows what I ask her a question.

"Hey, this might sound a little weird, but do you think I'm attractive?"

"Huh"

"Well, as a woman, do you think I have anything, you know, going for me,"

A big smile arises on her face.

"Yeah, yeah, I think so"

"My hair?"

"Yes,"

"Thanks, I know it's odd but I just got rejected by the first girl I asked out to the prom"

"Aaww"

"You going to the prom?"

"No, I'm a sophomore"

"Ah, well I think you're attractive too,"

A gleam comes over her eyes, and she giggles. Why am I always so lucky at this table?

I left the library feeling successful. But wasn't it a little hollow? says a voice deep inside of me. What girl wouldn't react like that to a question of that sort? Isn't asking it in the first place kind of desperate in itself? You were still in the library. I go to CM for the latter part of my Latin class. I'm supposed to right a short essay on one of Martials more naughty poems but instead I feel I have more important things to do.

Sitting at the computer at the back of the room, I bring up the browser; go to

Yahoo, then **Society and Culture. Sexuality** is blocked, I already know that, so I go to **Relationships**; then ohh...**Flirting**. I go to *Jellybeans Flirting Guide*. “Jellybean” hmm...I wonder if the webmaster is female. Anyway I look down the list of tips until I see “Get out there! —I’m tired of people whining to me about never getting dates when all they do is stand around and wait for people to come to them. People are not just going to come up to you and start a relationship. If you don’t try yourself I have no sympathy for you!”

“Jonathan is that Latin” a voice comes from behind.

“No Mrs. Narcissus, this is something more important”

“What?”

“Flirting advice”

“Well,” she says in a dry condescending voice, “I think you should do that on your own time. Right now it’s Mrs. Quintillia’s time. And what do you think she’d want you to do right now?”

“Latin” I said defeatedly.

“Ri-gh-t, so you get on that now,”

I pull up the blank Word document and start typing, Jellybeans’ words still ringing in my mind. I type “The tragedy of Martial’s 95th is that the two characters are deeply in love yet are eternally separated and...” I can’t go on. It’s too much. Karyn. The girl in the library. Jellybeans advice. Narcissus’ arrogance. Water starts pouring from my eyes. I didn’t plan it. I didn’t want to do it. It just happens and there was nothing I could do to stop it. So, without minimizing my file, I got out of my chair and ran out of the door that Ms. Narcissus doesn’t like me to go out of, and locked myself in a bathroom stall. It was the only thing I could think of doing.

Once my face is safely shielded facing the bathroom door I let go. My face contracts like a squeezed fruit. Only here can I do this with any dignity. Everyone goes a little crazy sometimes, you just have to do it in the right way. How could I do this to myself? You have gone through four years of life with these people, six with some of them, yet you know no one!” the same little voice inside of me says. And you will never have sex. Never! I cannot think of a more horrifying prospect. Get a hold of yourself, Jonathan, you know that’s not true, think rationally, of course you’re going to have sex.”

I crouch down. Maybe it is irrational, but sometimes, you’ve got to think irrationally. It not only sex either. I’ve been so isolated from my fellows of both sexes for so long. Short, brief exchanges and that’s it. I mean I know a lot of people, but I hardly *know* anyone. Here it is almost graduation, and I’ve missed out on high school. And sex? What sex! Here I am in the most sexually liberated, perverted age in memory and I’m almost an eighteen-year-old virgin! Oh most of that’s hyped up, many, many people graduate without having sex. Haven’t you ever seen *American Pie* or *Porkys*, the hole point was that they were about to graduate and were still virgins. I don’t care, what about that guy on Howard Stern who is a 43-year old virgin!

It went on like that for about an hour. I’m glad I did it in the bathroom stall.

Otherwise I'd just look stupid. There are things you can do in private that other people can understand, but if you did them in public wouldn't command pity. Like selfishly weeping because you hadn't had intercourse. But it was more than that. I had these people trying to help me like my mother and Mrs. Narcissus, but all they cared about was my paper self, my grades and my health, but had no overlapping concern with what I really cared about.

Narcissus is probably looking for me right now; good, I hope she is; looking frantically for me in the library, the cafeteria, back to Mrs. Quintillia's room. He, he...she'll never talk like that to me again. Aaaah... I've cooled down a little bit now. My tears have dried up. I think it's about time for me to get back to class.

When I got back I learned that Mrs. Narcissus had known where I was for a while, but had, indeed, been sufficiently alarmed to satisfy my egotistical grudge. Standing at the corner of the backroom near the forbidden door, I let my heart out to her and explained my absence, becoming excited enough to scare off an Indian girl who was sitting in there. It was a little funny seeing the surprised look on her face. What, you don't periodically go nuts in your country?

Mrs. Narcissus understood; it is common these days I guess, for it all to become too much for some people my age. To "lose it" occasionally is just a part of growing up. I explained to her as calmly and as inconspicuously as I could what had gone on. She assured me that many, herself included, had graduated as virgins. I told her that that was just the most conspicuous example of a disturbing trend: I was anti-social, barely knew anybody...and had no one to blame but myself. High school should be the easiest place to meet people, yet I had totally failed in that enterprise.

She nodded her head, told me I would not be translating anymore Martial and told to go to the library for the remainder of the period.

IV. An American Dionysia.

After that the staff seemed to act a little nicer towards me. Not out of fear I think, but more out of compassion, gentleness, because they knew what I was going through, and didn't want it to escalate. Most wrote it off to my Latin homework and the fact that we were nearing Valentine's Day. Unrelatedly this is also about when my relationship with Medea started to take off, when I got into that "fight" over her with that guy, and she unmercilessly (?) teased me with her pen. (It may be of historical interest to note that the person I had the faux fight with had introduced me to the only girl I made out with that year, at homecoming.)

She complained to me (sort of) about how no one was going to give her a Valentine next Monday. I promised her one (who saw that coming?) and she seemed flattered, though she could not attend the Valentines dance Saturday. That Friday even Mrs. Narcissus noted the change in my demeanor and saw what was causing it. Medea

Bravo was sure to come with me to the prom. I knew it. And I'd ask her right after Spring Break. But in the mean time I was free for the Valentine Dance.

What I saw when I got there was like an American Dionysia. It had always seemed absurd, those preachers and John Lithgow; those people who complained about Elvis' hips, that dancing was some kind of obscene substitute for sex. But once I had arrived, there wasn't quite as much dancing so much as there was hard-core rubbing. I seriously danced with two girls that night, one a pretty blonde, the other a nice Jewish girl from Leander. The chick from Leander was a good exercise in flirting. Jellybean would be proud. I bought her a drink and only asked questions about her, hardly allowing myself any commentary. So where are you from? Who do you know? What's your religion? I never talked about myself. My comments just framed hers.

We danced a little while; nothing very risqué, but I did get to breathe warmly down her left shoulder where it connected to her neck, which I'm told is an erogenous zone. Maybe I'm wrong. She said she had to go early and we hugged and I think I made a good impression. The other girl was sweet and we danced one jig at arm's length. Though I tried, she wouldn't let me exercise her erogenous zone.

I had more fun with the "dirty dancing" girls. This time there was not only a lot of fast dancing from behind, as there usually is, but in front as well. This one Mexican immigrant *chica* who could barely speak English was all over me. It was unreal. We moved to the blaring rhythms, at every beat in some imitation act. That's why I was surprised when she wouldn't let me kiss her or pick her up, but she'd always let me dance with her like that. I don't know how many chicks I dirty danced with that night; it was like a Christina Aguilera video. Even one of the "nice" girls I know, an absolutely gorgeous tall brunette, joined me in some torsal congress. I was surprised, "I didn't know you had it in you," She did it some more when they got out a chair and I didn't miss the opportunity to get in it. She did a little number above my hip, and came close to giving me a lap dance like some of the other girls who had guys on the chair, but all I got was a great view instead.

All in all I had a great night. I considered it a success. I do well at dances. Yes, I do well at dances. But all those girls that I've danced with over the years ...I never saw them again. I never struck up a relationship with any of them. It was just a brief moment of mutual gratification, and then, the lights come back on, as it were. Yes you do well occasionally at the dances, something inside me said, but you never turn it in to anything, you never *really* date. You're still really just a chump.

For the next few weeks Medea's impending acquiesce to my aforementioned proposal was what kept me going, amorically speaking. I had a few other candidates, but Medea was my only serious one. And I was confident that Medea was sufficiently secured anyway. I didn't have any classes with her but kept on when I did see her in CM and the hallways. Which wasn't very often I now realize.

On the Thursday before Spring Break started we had Shattered Dreams. This was an interesting “scared straight” demonstration in which the school enacted a faux car accident in which all the popular kids died. They really went all out for it too. The kids that “die” are taken from class that day, there are crosses with their names on them in front of the school, they even had a kind of memorial wall up for a week with the “dead” kids pictures glued to the top of one of those huge paper sheets with places to write your condolences on.

In the middle of second period we were summoned to the “Pack”, which was an official colloquialism for the large theatre/ presentation hall near the cafeteria. Thence we were entertained by a movie of people we knew becoming inebriated and displaying the typical symptoms thereof. I scoffed in my head. I don’t need that, look at what I am missing. The average teen party socialization rituals, acting stupid and fighting badly; while I was making something of my youth. They do look like they’re having fun, though. One highlight was when this girl drank beer through one of those tube cylinder devices. Everyone around her was chanting her name. She had the tube in her mouth while guys poured the beer through it into her. I wonder what Freud would think of the symbolism of that?

And then we went out to a near-by road where our drunken friends from the movie had just crashed into somebody’s car. We all stood there respectfully gawking in dead silence. A song kept playing over and over again on a nearby speaker system. “Come down to the River.” I had a front-center view of the fatalities. Our classmates slowly climbed out of the car. I knew one of them well, who was presently barely moving, having been thrown through a backseat window. Then he stopped moving. The driver I hadn’t met but did recognize, stumbled about for a while, her chest covered in blood. She walked over to him and started to do something like a crouch down towards him, crying. “Oh, no, no” could be heard, barely, over her tears. And the car that was hit. In the car that was hit was a large, middle-aged woman. It could have been my mother. She was alive, but her son in the passenger seat was dead. She yelled at the girl. The words are now muddled but the meaning is seared into my brain. “He’s dead! He’s dead! It’s your fault! How could you be so stupid, expletive! How could you be so irresponsible! Was it worth it?”

Slowly the ambulances and police cars came. The chaplain said a prayer and put a white sheet over the faces. And you could see them handcuffing our misguided comrade, and taking her away. Finally the paramedics finished wrapping up my friend. Put him on a stretcher. Lock him in an ambulance. Drive away with him. The other nearby body was still alive, but badly injured. He got in an ambulance too. Then they had to bring out the heavy machinery to get the passenger out from the twisted steel.

The next day was the Friday before Spring Break. We again were called to the Pack to meet death, this time personified. He arose from a coffin and began his demiurge

“I have come for you. I have come for all of you! Let’s see whom I hath netted of late!” And then after a brief memorial service-like video, chronicling the lives of our fallen comrades, we saw footage from the wreck. Damn, they cut me out, I was right there! Hey, shh! It’s not a *real* funeral. Then our living and dead classmates, who were sitting on the stage, read letters to their parents or others, telling them that they loved them, and that they were sorry that they had to leave and how they died. One was from a mother to the West Point football coach, telling him he could not arrive in August, because he broke both his legs. The whole thing had the look and feel of a real funeral, probably because a parlor was one of the sponsors.

I noticed on the wall when we got back to class, the “nice” brunette I talked about was there, as was Michael whom I knew as well as any of my closer associates, which isn’t very well at all. And Wes, the guy that was going to West Point on a football scholarship, I knew him a little; he wouldn’t let other kids pick on me in eighth grade. I’ve never forgotten that. I tried to sign as many as I could that I knew. So many people expressed their grief, so sincerely, even though it was only a mock funeral. I know I should’ve pitied these fallen comrades, and at some levels I did, but on another level, I envied them.

That Saturday night I stayed up late. I caught the musical performance on Mad TV, a band called T.A.T.U. The music was pretty good, nice rhythm. “All the things she said, all the things she said, doo da do do doo. This is not enough,” And then I saw one of the most sensual things I had ever seen on mainstream TV: the two girls in schoolgirl uniforms suddenly engaged in a Sapphic kiss! This surprised the audience in my living room “Are they really lesbians?” “Isn’t this a ploy to get girls to go gay?” “I’ll look it up on the ‘net and find out,” I had to find out. No, I don’t think they’re really lesbians, it’s just a ploy to get guys to watch them. That in itself is kind of a turn on. But we’re against it right. Of, course I am.

As much as they upset my socio-political mores, I couldn’t get T.A.T.U. off my mind when I went to sleep. How can I reject something vehemently because it is so inconceivably subversive yet be so enamored personally. The question worsened my already difficult sleep. Early Sunday morning, just before five I walk into the living room, being thankful for the sleep I got. The TV. Nothings on. VH1, ...videos? Maybe you can see those girls again. I take a chance, top twenty; I never keep up with music any more. After waiting video after video, and hoping T.A.T.U. would be next I, for some unknown reason decide to get on the treadmill. Gotta lose weight if I’m gonna get a prom date. After a while conscience intervenes. I don’t need to see the video. I’m against it anyway, yeah. So I go back to sleep without seeing the countdown through.

V. Prom Date.

I worked out as soon as I woke up, and just before I went to bed every night that week, about 50 minutes each day. For me, it was a sacred exercise. It was the one thing I

could do to help me in my aspirations. Get fit, get a date. Get fit, get a date. Always saying to myself “Medea will go, Medea will go, Medea will go,” I kept my faith and my practice up that whole Spring Break. Of course, as you know, Medea did not go.

So after the most likely candidate refused to run, I looked to find who else might be elected. I didn’t have much luck, though I think I was successful because many of the proposee’s were very flattered that I asked. On one occasion, after I was bummed out that one well-endowed prospect had a boyfriend; I asked a perfect stranger who was standing around in the halls if she wanted to go, out of nowhere.

“I really don’t do...”

“What you have a boyfriend?”

“a ...girlfriend...actually,”

My eyes widened.

“Oh...well then, at least you’re not going to be with another guy then,”

Obviously things were getting quite desperate. I asked out basically every girl I recognized at school. They all had other plans. Finally my “Transition Coordinator” got involved. I don’t know why I have a transition coordinator. I never asked for a transition coordinator. I don’t want a transition coordinator. I even don’t think I need a transition coordinator. But the state says I need a transition coordinator, so she’s paid a hundred dollars a week to bug the hell out of me.

But I didn’t have any other choices. Besides this girl she promised to set me up with sounded nice, and she said she was attractive. So I agree to be introduced. I went up to the district administration building on the pretext of attending a preview of the SELF courses I would have to take next year. I was full of anticipation when Saturn, my “tran-cor” announced she was in the building. Walking though the hall. The door is opened. She appears, dawning from the obstructive door! And now whence I finally set mine eyes upon my destined date I felt upon mine heart...nothing.

Nothing. As hard as I could I could not force my loins to react, which was odd because that was what it was always doing. Her hair was not washed and I’m not sure if her clothes were clean, as they hung on her, baggily, almost like the way boys wore their clothes. She was short but her body was long. She had long, lanky arms, and a long neck upon which rested a stout, oh, raspberry shaped head, for lack of a better fruit. Her face was altogether elfin. She had a long nose upon which rested square black glasses, which were well complemented by her bushy eyebrows. Her name was Eris Discordia.

I was not about to be discouraged on account of her physicality though. I knew that it was personality, the yoke inside of the shell that is the true harbinger of a good relationship or no. But whence she spoke I began to wonder if I had abandoned Galen too early. Her words were cynic, laconic, a bit misanthropic. She did not really convey a sense of unnecessary attraction toward me, but was not unpleasant. But the person in a delirium of the heart is not one to see obstacles in front of him; neither is the one who has developed a tolerance.

Upon the termination of our visit I informed Saturn that I would indeed court Eris, pending the exhaustion of two alternative options. The next day my alternative options said no. I made the best of my destiny. A few days later on the first of April (how appropriate!) I went to her “PCP meeting” as a preliminary to asking her out. The experience was not unlike that of a lamb being led to the slaughter. There was a not imperceptible anticipation ‘mongst the junta to see their little bit of social engineering through. I particularly like the subtle advise of the last tran-cor when she had come to the “Social life and leisure” section of Eris’ life skills chart paper:

“And I think you should try to be more spontaneous. Just agree to do something out of the blue. If, say, Chiron here just called you up and asked you to do something, maybe you should say ‘to heck with it Chiron, yes I’ll go,’” It was the biggest elephant in the room situation that I had ever been in. I knew what they were doing, but didn’t know if she knew what they were doing. They knew what they were doing, and they knew that I knew what they were doing, but did they know that she knew what they were doing or not? Eventually I found out she did know what they were doing, but didn’t know that I knew what they were doing, or if I knew that she knew. I’m confused.

In confidence I told one of the tran-cors that I had intended on calling Eris after the conference and any public displays of their experiments success would have to wait. Whence I did call her and got the indication that she would go to the prom with me I let out a great sigh of relief. Finally the weight of this Herculean task was lifted from my shoulders.

VI.

Capitalism and the Teenage Male Ethic.

It wasn’t long after I had secured Eris that my innate business instincts kicked in. For some reason, now that I was free from looking for a prom date, or now that I had to go with Eris, I was much more willing put myself “out there”. It was exhilarating, for I had never known such virile popularity in my life. I had never been so sexually active as when I was out selling doughnuts. Freud might say that now that I had my opportunity to express myself as a sexual being publicly I was experiencing the joy of being de-castrated. I guess I’d have to agree with him.

Herein follows a brief synopsis of my marketing activities and product sales growth/ sexual awakening:

April 21: My first kiss comes when I am entering the cafeteria. Strictly business. A girl at a black table has me kiss her on the top of her hand for a doughnut. Next, over at one of the popular/haggling tables the population kept pressuring this one girl to kiss me and does not really succeed, though she dry pucks by my cheek; they say I flinched. The long delays needed to produce even this wore out my patience, and I feel a little guilty about watching them make her squirm in the public spotlight.

While yet participating in this debacle, the first girl came over and summoned me up to the hither table whence I learned that some of its occupants had promised one of their own a sum of \$20 dollars to engage me in a kiss. The participant's visible apprehension, as she stood there considering the prospect, filled the entire room with anticipation. Unlike the previous mouth kiss, this was in the hither (front) part of the cafeteria, and it was during "A" lunch, when everybody wasn't cooled off and tired yet.

Instead of a chant, now a buzz was filling the room and my ear, as she struggled with herself to go through with it. For my part I just stood there seeing where this would go. Finally, once all the attention of cafeteria was focused on us, she got up the courage to put her lips to mine. The incredible roar was deafening, as the crowd's convulsion reached critical mass. Considering how reluctant she was in initiating the act I believe my partner rather enjoyed it, for either herself or to please the crowd she kept our Manichean connection up for at least 5 or 7 seconds, her ebonic lips smothering my own.

I was quite embarrassed by the whole incident. I considered giving up my whole enterprise, and did for a few hours. But I am glad that I did not abandon, entirely, my capitalistic impulses. At the last lunch I found a cute little Asian girl who had expressed interest in my product before. After the purchase was completed I asked on a whim...

"If you want to kiss me you can," I put my cheek out.

She smiles and pivots upward to place a nice wet one on my cheek.

"Thanks" I say to her smiling face.

"Mum-ha"

It was the smile that made all the difference.

April 24: Monday, I have an opportunity to peddle my wares in Economics and adjacent classrooms. I am confronted, however, with a competing enterprise that is quick becoming my main business rival –homemade breakfast burritos. They will, I fear, become my Pepsi. But my competitor still has to pay out money for advertising, and he doesn't have anything touching the costless gimmick I have. Also he has to pay himself as an employee, whereas I don't hire anyone, to avoid the unions.

Even though most of the "paying" customers had gathered like moths to a lamp amongst the breakfast burritos, I still had one memorable encounter in that first room. It seems one of the Hispanic girls near the back of the room was genuinely hungry, but had no cash on her. Well, I had a solution to that. For some reason, even after I solicit the name of my business, people don't immediately fathom its consequences. I had to explain, usually with the helpful insight from nearby onlookers, the exchange, on several occasions, including this one.

Once she was convinced, however, she agreed to kiss the humble

proprietor on the cheek. While I hunched over her desk, she leaned her head over to mine so that her lips may touch my cheek. It was not the kiss that I remember so much as it was her grand soft bosom as it caressed my arm during her torso's short travel across the desk and back again. Ooooh, that alone could of secured her two doughnuts if she would but ask. A fair exchange of sugar I think.

The rest of my business activity that day was of necessity anticlimax - a word, by the way, that I think I will become more and more familiar with as I advance in years. Whence I visited Mrs. Azbils room, my former rhetoric instructor had the audacity to offer me ten dollars for the corresponding number of doughnuts (not for herself alone, I should mention, but to be divided up among her class, from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs). Being the capitalist that I am, I could not take the mercantilist route, and pick and choose whom I sell to, even if I wanted to see if I could get more kisses.

When I returned to Economics, I was informed by Mr. Quinn (medicine ball) that I had to liquidate the balance of my stock.

April 25 was another good business day I think, though business was a little slow. I only got two kisses. When I was soliciting on one of the front (hither) tables, a girl volunteered to kiss me on the cheek without buying a doughnut. I don't know why, but I suppose she wanted to show up her friend. As she lifted her head vertically up to my cheek I had an insidious idea. I turned my head forward so that our lips met, ever so briefly. She got real mad for some reason, and even told a vice-principal on me. The vice principal informed me that I could no longer sell doughnuts for kisses, an ordinance I had no intention of following.

Later, while frequenting the water fountain on break from CMC I had another sell. She was taller than I was, black, a curl of her hair was dyed a deep red and she included small nasal piercing. She was very well endowed, and not at all chubby, but neither was she anorexic. Her clothes at every point hugged her body tightly. I propositioned her with my doughnuts. She didn't understand at first; a girl, whom I did not recognize, providentially clarified as she passes us, not stopping. She accepted my offer and graced my soft cheek with the wet embrace of her thick lips-- an experience I hadn't ever known, and did not find altogether unenjoyable.

April 28, another slow business day but not without its executive perks. The first lady with whom I exchange pastries in my most entrepreneurial way was a very shy, but sweet, and, if looked at closely, beautiful young woman. I had given her a doughnut yesterday on credit and today she was yet to procure the necessary currency. So I suggested the alternative payment option and to my moderate surprise she accepted, kissing my hand. Given bait, and the memory of some of my former experiences, I asked for further endowment, this time on the cheek. She said no. But I had heard that before, and further harassed her into a defensive posture -- that I was afraid I might corrupt her delicate genius. But

behind that vulnerable shell, she had a rock hard determination to resist me. I felt like I was in the presence of a teen movie heroine. So I moved on.

At lunch I found a true humanitarian, who, being the very model of feminine grace and charity that she was, not only bought a doughnut outright (that means with money) but also volunteered to procure a pastry for an impecunious friend of hers. Without her bottom leaving the seat she pivoted herself up against me and placed a wet one on my cheek. The look in her eye could have been affection, but I knew better – it could only have been joyful spontaneity.

The eye of my next costumer, though, was much more definitive. I still had to liquidate my stock of about seven units; I was tired, exhausted, cramped a little from all the mobile advertising, could barely speak my mouth was so dry, and I was ready to give these doughnuts away. And then it happened. A girl I had never seen before, a dirty blonde, shorter than I am and compact like they all were. When I saw her coming into the Main Building entrance while I was on errand for the library I instinctively offered her a deal. She listened patiently as I told of my sufferings, with an aura of empathy and a look of compassion. Our eyes locked and we gazed at each other for some reason, in a kind of trance.

“I’ll kiss you,”

“You want a doughnut?”

“No, but I’ll kiss you, anyway”

I offered her my hand and without breaking the magic stare of her eye, kissed - not just put her lips to, but actually kissed - my hand with her glittered lips. Whence she had put my hand a way, almost reverently, I offered her a doughnut again, but she still refused.

“No,” she responds. “That wasn’t for a doughnut; I just wanted to do it,”

She then vanished in the dusky late afternoon hall. I knew she had a boyfriend, that was why she requested my hand, but her piercing gaze had given me a sense of reluctance, almost embarrassment, but still...an almost dutiful sense of love, that she could not ignore. Perhaps I am over reading her, or seeing things; for I was close to delirium with exhaustion, but maybe for two minutes there I was party to a short, but forbidden romance with an angelic stranger.

Last day, in many ways I am glad this is over, but on a much more shallow level, I am sad to see the project go – no more easy passes at girls all over the school! Oh, well at least I got one last hurrah when the girl with the dyed hair gave me kiss on the cheek in compensation for another doughnut. This one was dry, unlike the last one, but I still enjoyed it. I tried to go out with a bang, when I noticed one of the “punk” girls with a rainbow collar necklace had her arm over another’s shoulder. I just ended up embarrassing myself though – they were sisters.

VII. Prom Night.

i.

May 10, 2003. Prom Night. It was the night I had been waiting for all year. The night when I, Chiron Philogynos, would, for sure, make out extensively with a chick I knew, and Lord knows where it might go from there. Needless to say, I had high expectations. And these were only heightened by my eighteenth birthday.

Turning Eighteen on May sixth that year had both legal and practical ramifications. One thing I was really psyched about was the ability to access adult material and establishments. Of course, I would never have accessed adult material before (eh he,) especially on the Internet (yeah, right) so now I was experiencing this for the very first time and just now exposed to the completely foreign domain of adult entertainment (Ha!) Seriously though, I could finally buy stuff out in the open, with neither shame nor trepidation.

So what's the first thing I do as soon as I get off from school? You guessed it. I told mom that I needed to go to the bookstore to by "something" and without further question I was in Barnes and Nobles, while she waited outside in the car. I then proudly purchased the latest issue of *Playboy* and Count Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*. "Masoch" what a stupid name! Who would ever put "Masoch" or "Masochistic" at the top of a book?

Playboy had been a twelve year olds summer staple, but *Venus in Furs* had a more immediate purpose. Throughout the course of the day, whilst I was telling everyone about what I had assumed would be a milestone of personal freedom, Medea (remember her?) informed me that it was recently her birthday as well. I prostrated myself before her for not knowing, and assured her that I would procure her one as soon as possible. Then maybe she would give me a present? "Emm, maybe" she purred coyly.

Previously, I had attempted to procure her phone number or e-mail address, so that we could keep up our "game" after school. She said she had neither phone, nor computer, but she also said on different occasions that she was a virgin and mother as well, so you never knew with her. I did know, however, that she enjoyed this little game of ours and I wanted to give her something to remember me by. She at least professed active literacy, so I thought that the most appropriate gift on this occasion was Masoch, who wrote erotic novels about beautiful women and their adoring submissive men. *Venus* was his masterpiece, and every time Medea read it, I hoped, it would be like her bossing me around again and again. I inscribed thus:

**"To my lovely and ever assertive Venus, Medea Bravo, from her
humble servant Chiron Philogynos."**

All this will come into play later, but let me get back to turning eighteen. Another incipient anticipation incumbent upon my anniversary was access to adult

establishments. My further aged sibling, Diogenes, had vowed, at only my slightest allusion, to escort me to one of these fine establishments on the first Friday after my birthday, which happened to be the day directly antedating my prom.

Alas, however, it was not to be so! For upon first gazing upon the directory of local establishments I learned, with great indignity, that all of them solemnly barred all those whom had yet to achieve their *twenty first* birthday. I blame only myself, for had I not jinxed it by doubting in my heart that I was on the cusp of seeing my first real boob? But never fear: whence Diogenes had learned of the injustice, he chivalricly defended my honor by suggest an equally (?) stimulating establishment that would befit my entry into manhood.

“Let’s go to Hooters,”

And indeed we did. I had never been there before so this was still a fitting initiation. But I was a bit disappointed by the clumsiness of the waitresses: they kept dropping things so often, and since we were seated next to the condiments bar, we had to see them bend down and pick them up at least seven times. Just goes to show what happens when you hire for looks not talent! And that reminds me of how cold it was at the establishment. Those waitresses must have been freezing in the little tank tops, bright orange short shorts, and almost invisible stockings they had to wear. Actually I didn’t even realize they were stockings until late; they give the impression of a really good tan.

Despite these failings (?) Diogenes and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. When we told the waitress, a very nice girl by the way, that we were present to celebrate my eighteenth anniversary she asked if we wanted them to “sing” for us. We heartily agreed for this was what we had come for. None of us expected mere vocals. Within minutes all the waitresses in the restaurant were clapping hands in lines, one on the other side of the place, and one coming out of the kitchen towards me. Once they had recruited me into the line they led me into the very midst of the restaurant, where I met the recruit from the other line.

Ding! Bang! Jingle! Ding!

“Attention! Attention! Everyone,” the senior waitress announced.

“This is Chiron’s eighteenth birthday! And it is Robert twenty-first birthday!”

“Woo-o! Yea!” the crowd responded, not minding that we had interrupted their meals.

“And they are about to entertain us all by playing a game of leap frog!”

Without thinking why they would be entertained by this, or why Robert had not gone to a strip club instead, I immediately positioned myself for the execution of the game. After about four or five turns we shook hands and congratulated each other on our shared sublimity. I then gave the waitress a big hug; it was the happiest moment of the excursion. I know you’re not supposed to touch the waitresses, but, when you have a good excuse, I say use it.

Once I got back to my table the manager, being an astute capitalist, realized we were in the perfect mood to avail ourselves of some fine “Hooters” memorabilia. A word to the wise: if you ask and they say they’re not in the calendar, always say, “You should

be.” All in all, Diogenes ended up buying a calendar (signed by all the girls), a t-shirt, and I think some food as well. But when I asked to have a picture taken with my server she said they were out of film and we hadn't availed ourselves of a camera either. Diogenes and I agreed with each other, “Whenever you know you’re going to be in a situation like this, *always bring a camera*,”

Our ebullient mood was complimented that night by the first words that came from the radio when we turned on the car: it was *Loveline*: “Been going down on her for eight years? Always smelled like that?”

ii.

With this as my prelude, I had high aspirations for Prom Night itself. I had put off a - frankly juvenile - tradition which I had started in eighth grade, because I was so sure I was going to make out tonight. The tradition, which, looked at from my present vantage point was incredibly immature, was to... well, grab a girl’s bottom then run off at the end of every school year. I had done it properly in only freshman and sophomore year; junior year was more of a technicality. But this year I was leaving all that behind and having a passionate, *classy* make out session with a girl I hadn’t just met. I was very optimistic.

And I had good reason to be. Eris had really opened up to me while we talked during bi-weekly phone calls. I’m good on the phone, I don’t know why. Another girl called me up once in sophomore year, first time she called, and by the end of the call, well, let’s just say I had had the most erotic experience of my admittedly short life. Eris hadn’t been so that forward, but we had a good time nonetheless. It was on the fourth call that I made my move, asking her about some of her more intimate affairs, trying to learn what turned her on. I got a surprisingly literal answer.

I don’t think I should go into more detail here. I respect Eris, and unlike some of the other exploits described above, this was as much her own as it was mine. Suffice it to say that I wanted to understand how a virgin girl’s sexual life works, as it was a doppelganger to my own. I also considered Eris a serious candidate for a long-term relationship, and there where intimate exchanges that I felt where needed before we embarked. Unlike most of my previous amorous adventures, I knew this was a relationship between *two* people, and what went on behind her eyes was as important as what went on behind mine.

If you still have a prurient interest in what went on during our telephone conversations perhaps this memorable exchange will succor you:

“Electric toothbrush does that answer your question,”

“...no, err, yes, that’s...”

“I’m sorry that was too much information, wasn’t it?”

“No. No that’s exactly what I was looking for...”

Thence came the night of the prom. Mother had a strangely antiquarian idea of what would happen.

“Now, this is a formal. Do not *try* anything with her. No one really does anything like that at the prom, that’s just in the movies”

Well, apparently mother had yet to appreciate the influence of art on society, for even my varied experiences at the wilder school dances could not have prepared me for the hedonism that permeated this, this American Bacchanalia. Whence we entered the room I was struck by the mass of people gathered at the dance floor. It was, for lack of a better phrase, wall to wall humping. Everybody was with somebody, and everyone was all over the other. For myself it seemed a good portent. But was it?

I led Eris into the fray realizing that now I could finally let loose the passions that had been held up inside of me, and release them upon her soft lift body. Everything seemed appropriate: our company was appropriate, the occasion was appropriate, even the song was called "Let’s get it on to the early morn," That "later" promised me so, so many times, that was supposed to be the right time to let my impulses free had finally come. If not now, when? It was not to be, for even at this juncture, I would not be able to let my instincts run free for long. But first, an enjoyable encounter.

"Achilles! I did not expect to see you here!" My greatest friend Achilles was present, I had not seen him for a year, because he had transferred, but I had known him since grade school.

"Artimis invited me," Artimis was his old girlfriend. Medea was also present, though this time as comradess, not mistress.

"Hey, Chiron, is this your date,"

"Yep, I brought a date to the prom, you owe me a dance later tonight" We had been playing another game of quid pro quo. Medea took a picture of Achilles and me and all seemed quite jovial.

Then Eris and I went back to the dance floor. Bacchus himself could not have created a better scene. Again the teeming flesh of dozens of ebullient teenagers moved with every note pouring from the rostrum. Again the urges of a thousand occasions were liberated, and the human beast revealed himself in his truest form. On the whole, an average high school prom. The beating noise, the constantly fluctuating crowds, my...” enthusiastic” caresses, it all became too much for my agoraphobic prom date to handle. Agoraphobic?

Eris burst into tears. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, Chiron," She buried her head in my

chest and held her arms tightly to my torso. I led her off the dance floor with no little attention from my classmates. I got her to sit down at a table far from the spot of our shared calamity. She explained to me that she was agoraphobic, which means she had an aversion to crowds, loud music, and people touching her. Couldn't she have told me about this earlier? She kept saying it was her fault and that she was sorry, which alleviated my guilt a little, for I did then, and do now, place at least part of the blame upon myself.

I held her crying form, for about an hour or so. She never seemed to mind it when I held her like this. Luckily, a cousin of hers, from a neighboring school, had also been invited, so I was not alone in consoling her. Eris informed me she couldn't dance anymore this evening. Eventually she allowed me to go back on to the dance floor, unaccompanied. That was a profound disappointment. Though the dance floor was just a mass of gyrating flesh, everybody had their own partner and wasn't willing to share. I had a brief dance with Medea but no touchy-touchy if you know what I mean. I even had a strange encounter with a girl dressed in a pimp get up because I was getting too close to her female "friend"

After about an hour of this I had had enough. My family had paid some four hundred dollars for this night, I've waited all year, and I'll be damned if she's not going to dance! Her ticket, my ticket, Buick LeSabre rental, dinner at Ramono's, corsage, we bought everything but her dress! And she's not going to dance! The more I walked around the prom, alone, thinking about it, the angrier I got.

So I started looking around for her, because come hell or high water, she was going to dance tonight. Whence I finally found her, she was already more than happy to comply. The first thing she said was how much she wanted to get back on the dance floor. I was a little taken aback by this pre-emptive enthusiasm for something I was about to angrily demand of her. But once I was sure it wasn't a trick, we returned to the dance floor, cautiously.

Indeed, we kept at a chaste distance and our arms were spread out to their length. We must have made a stark contrast amongst the hedonism that surrounded us. For the record I did attempt in the manly task of mock pro-creation that is the essence of the boy-girl dance. But it was all for naught; for each time the snake leapt towards its pray, the beaver made her getaway. So there was contact twixt our twain torsos, but ever off to a side, if you know what I mean. And I was even able to kiss her in a wise, upon her neck and shoulder, but she sternly (arrogantly?) refused, even to the threshold of her home, to let me kiss upon her elfin face.

Whence Diogenes, my chaperone, inquired of my success, I responded thusly, "A girl is not required to kiss a boy at prom. And, conversely, a boy isn't required to call her again, either,"

VIII.
Birthday Present.

i.

Now don't get me wrong. I thoroughly enjoyed prom. After a while, once I had divined that any amorous pursuits with Eris would be futile, I decided to enjoy myself. It was a kick seeing Achilles again, and I could bask, rightly, in glee over the completion of my schooling. It was a larger, rite of passage feeling. The prom and graduation, and the attendant ceremonies, are the modern American equivalent of primitive tribal manhood initiations. As advanced as we like to think we are, we still hang on to the kind of symbolic pageantry that has existed since the dawn of man. I was a graduate; I would never be in this same position again. Everyone sympathized with me, recalling their own youths. I had every right to let my proverbial spirit free.

For me the symbolism was even starker, due to the concurrence of the graduation festivities with my eighteenth birthday. As referenced earlier, Medea had also claimed a near anniversary. Whether this was true or not is beside the point. Of greater import was the fact that I had bought *Venus in Furs* for her, and the satisfaction of "serving" her with it would be a pleasure for me as well as her. I determined further to request on her part an intimate garment, the attainment of which, I gathered, would be the criterion of success for the whole of my exploits.

The perfect occasion for such a transaction was provided for by Providence. The Latin club was throwing a toga party, complete with gladiators, a Roman marriage, a funeral oration, and slave auctions. Mrs. Quintillia had tried to make me a senator, but I insisted on being a slave. I informed Medea of the event and she consented to buying me. I made preparations for having *Venus* on hand to present to her when the time arrived.

Came the fateful day I was ready with my burlap smock or whatever and the book carefully hidden in my backpack. Once fastened the teacher instructed me to "mill around" outside, before the real show started. I didn't realize that Mrs. Quintillia had gone all out for real chains, spray painted gold for the slaves to wear. I didn't mind though, it added to the effect. With me were two female slaves. One was an absolutely gorgeous Chicagoan blonde that had only been with us for the latter semester. Her sparkling personality matched her face as well, making her a fine prize for any man to covet. Very classy. The other was a shortish brunette with whom I had no great acquaintance. She wore more chains though (I couldn't stand the thought of the Chicagoess wearing more shackles) and was open to new ideas about how to get bought.

"Maybe, you should try to...I don't know, struggle a bit in your tethers, Melissa" I suggested.

"Guys like that,"

She unhesitatingly commenced and I took a little guilty pleasure in watching the spectacle.

It was surprising how easily I could switch from top to bottom, but I relished both. I begged many a maiden to purchase me and the response was not dissimilar from when I was offering them cookies. Again, I was having amorous events with them, with little on

my part other than putting my hands together and saying please, please buy me.

The reaction I got from Medea was far less notable. After I had introduced myself "Is there anything I can do for you?" She started haggling with me over the price. All the money, of course, I was to provide. There was always a marked difference in her demeanor when we "played" in public rather than in confidence. I tried to lead her to the Latin class so as to present her with that token of my obedience, but we were soon in the midst of her acquaintances, and she lost interest. Fine. She's out of the picture again.

I had much more luck after the Emperor was assassinated. Dr. Peed, an assistant principle, was assassinated during a senatorial oration, and I was to be one of his pallbearers. The thing was so heavy that I very nearly rolled him off the sedan, if it wasn't for the assistance of the aforementioned teen movie heroine. One of the more intellectual members of the Latin club then gave the funeral oration. Most of the audience agreed that the assassin killed the wrong person upon hearing it. Whilst listening (and listening and listening) to the speech I spotted a guy on the thither end of the crowd, who, though by no means a Latin student, had a girl on either side handcuffed to him. Apparently I was not the only one whose kinky side was brought out by the occasion.

Speaking of which, I soon abandoned the funeral novel and went to find a new mistress. This time she was not tardy on appearing. Indeed, the first girl I went to, who was at one of the vending booths, expressed interest.

"I don't have any money..."

"It's OK just pretend" And I extended an open palm.

She then gestured, "paying" me and took the end of my gold chain. Finally a real mistress! And not a bad package too. She was a light blonde with black roots, and her friend was a straight blonde. Both had very nice bodies, and my main Domina revealed quite a bit more cleavage than was common those days.

They then led me up to the cafeteria, sharing the end of the chain amongst them and I followed along the length of the chain, which was tied, loosely, around my risks. I stopped a couple of times along the journey, just so I could feel them pull at my chain.

"Look down," Domina demanded once. I was more than happy to oblige, considering my jeans hugged view of her bottom. After attending to some minor business, they then led me straight into the midst of the cafeteria as an exhibit to their friends. It was exhilarating.

"Aren't you the Doughnut guy?"

"We bought him, come on, don't you want him to do anything for you?"

No one had any request, so my mistresses then decided to exhibit me in the gym. I was more haughty than embarrassed to be seen captive by such a lovely vixen amongst my peers, and envy seemed to outweighed pity in their reaction. My mistresses then told me to sit on a chair while they went to the ladies room. While sitting thus I gained a sense of the real emancipation that the Roman *servi* must have felt. I didn't mind it as it was all part of the festival, but it **was** hot in the burlap, and the chains **were** heavy, and I **was** sweating like a pig. I needed some water.

"Mistress, may I have some water?" I humbly ask Domina upon her return.
"Emmmm, no,"

I wasn't amused. Luckily Domina soon relinquished me to her partner, who was more merciful, and let me have some fruit juice. She then sold me to another not unattractive Lady, who led me back to the Latin room and terminated my servitude.

ii.

Of the attendant ceremonies I planned on not attending, the Powder Puff Football Game was by far the most prominent – indeed it was alone. Somehow I couldn't comprehend why I should want to dress up like a girl cheerleader and watch the junior and senior ladies play football. But a video clip on the news drew my attention to the complexities of the ritual and changed my prospective status concerning the event from one of absence to one of determined presence.

Whilst sitting at the computer, I heard the familiar electronic voice of the newscaster over my right shoulder. There is a high school hazing incident in Chicago. My ears perk a little, but as yet the machinery of my brain had not received the signal that this is of any great interest. Then as the details roll in and the words "girls' touch football game" emerge I realize the necessity of my attention. This is a powder puff football game. I walk over to the TV and turn up the volume to observe the broadcast properly.

A number of understandings and resolutions appear in me at the same time. I am at once quite gladdened to find that the ceremonies included a kind of "wam" (**w**et and **m**essy) element with the girls lathering each other in food and mud and things, yet sickened at this application. It is a complicated unfolding of emotions. At once I am thrilled at the knowledge that it exists, but at the very same moment utterly repulsed by this malicious battery of girls, identical to my own female brethren. And there is the initiatory element – hadn't I *wanted* to be hazed? It was also cool that I didn't have to dress up like a cheerleader, and that's always a plus. I became determined to correct the misapplication by attending the local event, and participating successfully, with no one getting hurt.

Meanwhile, I finally got a chance to present Medea with the *Venus*. I had been taken down to the office for wearing my Hooters shirt and was pleasantly surprised that Medea was occupying herself thence as a student aide. Upon reading the inscription, she commenced that broad smile and coy stare that... that has ever made me so weak. She was an excellent seductress, in the literal sense of the term; her charm could make any one fall in lust with her.

That being said, I was determined to have a trophy to remember her by. It was to be the crowning achievement of my late amorous pursuits. My tran-cors would be pleased – I set a life goal, identify the appropriate steps to achieve it, and then I pursued them. How much I owe to the schools extracurricular curriculum! The next time I see her, I

shall humbly request the garment as a token of her appreciation, and I gamble that she is just the type to do it as well.

As it happens our paths interlock next on Tuesday, the day of the Powder Puff Football game. I had presented her with the *Venus* on Friday. When we are alone in the back room of the CMC area...

“Ppppppsssss...Medea,”

“Yes,” I motion her to come hither.

“Remember that book I gave you last week?”

“Yeah, I’m in the first chapter,”

“Well, remember how you said, maybe, you would give me something in return?”

“Ehh-ha”

“Well...I was thinking, maybe an intimate garment?”

That coy Jezabellian smile crawled up on her face yet again. At that moment though Mrs. Narcissus came into the room. She (Medea) quickly adjusted her situation and began to lean over a window ledge, her compact jeans hugged bottom pointing, perhaps not accidentally, towards my direction. Medea was thin, but not bony, and about my height; she had that “Irish” look: white, freckled skin, and fiery orange red hair, and often wore short shorts, and tight fitting tops. She was not as well-endowed as some of the other girls in school, but was enough to excite the fantasies of any adolescent boy, or newborn infant.

After giving me a definitive “maybe” she disappeared from the room, leaving me in bewildered anticipation. Did she go to...? Is she really going...? Am I actually going to get...? But after an exciting sixty minutes of waiting, I divined that my expectations were immature, on many levels, and resigned myself, like Nixon, to the fact that what I was waiting for was never going to happen.

Despite this I can still look forward to the Powder Puff Football Game tonight. I had asked about the “wam” element around school, and its existence was confirmed to me, yet I still had my doubts. The game was to be played at dusk and into the night - appropriately, for we were on the dusk of our youth. While attending I would miss the last episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, an effigy of our generation. As soon as I got into the car after school that day, Mother had to inform me of some very grave news. It was my grandmother. I knew it was my grandmother as soon as she turned off the radio, not because she had been ill or anything, but because the imprint on mothers’ voice couldn’t have meant anything else.

She had fallen, badly, and was in the hospital. Not a serious wound for the young, but at 83, any instance could be “it.” We would have to go down to Huntsville as soon as possible. No one said anything, but we all had the same thing on our mind. This could be “it”. I really wanted to help Rhea, as we called her, I *really* did, but she was 300 miles away and in a hospital room, what could I do? I decided, on the advice of my mother, to go out there and enjoy myself. “There’s nothing you can do about it” Though this attitude I did adopt, I couldn’t help, looking over to the east, knowing three hundred miles thence

my grandma lay in a hospital bed...

I was jittery before the game. For one thing, I knew not what the nature of the even truly entailed. It was going to be sexualized; there was little in the attendant ceremonies that wasn't. But was it to be of the same nature as the one in Chicago, purified? If that were indeed so, how should I act? I really hope I don't make an ass out of myself. I had only anticipation as my maiden, but I couldn't have dreamt how she would be met by destiny.

But whence I arrived my mood had become more relaxed. Achilles was there, it was nice to see him again, as was Medea; I hadn't expected either of them to be present. For most of the evening I just shot the breeze with my cohorts by the edge of the field, not really paying attention to the game (I could never get into football, too many starts and stops, unlike baseball, in which some action is always incipient, but that's really off subject, isn't it?) Also present, according to herself, was Jaime Johnson, who recognized me, but I not her (see chapter 2). There was a little bit of a show from the "football" teams, they were some of the prettiest and best known girls in school, and we were watching them play around in their skimpy uniforms; we had a modestly beneficial view. I got pictures.

This time I had not neglected my camera, but had used up all my film before the first half, long before the most entertaining episodes of the evening. The last one was used on a picture of Medea and me, the only one I have. I got one of the players to take it for me; I had attempted, without success, to get her to use her own camera, and then give me the photo later, but no such luck was to be had. Perhaps it is for the best; as long as I have that photo I will always have that mischievous little smile.

When the sky was beginning to darken, I realized that I might be able to use this occasion to advance my situation re Medea. Despite all precedent I told the assembled spectators something of our arraignment. But it was not to be so simple for me to get this San Grail. It immediately turned into a game of *quid pro quo*. Everybody became involved, proposing a host of ridiculous tradeoffs. I stayed firm though. I must have quid first, before I commenced any of their outlandish quos.

Finally an idea occurred to me, so innovative, I at first dared not to utter it. Then I posed it as a hypothetical situation.

"What if I, no it's too much," and may get me kicked off the property.

"No tell me, what where you about to propose..." Jaime responded curiously, with a hint of impatience in her voice.

"What if *you* and Medea kissed, and then I'll streak across the field?" I present the proposition timidly, in the event she is outraged; I am taken aback by her answer.

"OK," she responds without hesitation, or trepidation. I am bewildered.

She then causally tapped Medea, for the event and we head across bleachers. I am shaken, with uncollated emotions of elation, disbelief, fear, and intense anticipation. Medea gave me a timely smile as we passed through the gate, exiting the field proper. As we are about to go under the bleachers, I turn to Jaime.

“Have you heard of that band T.A.T.U.”?

“T.A.T.U.?” Jaime grimaced, as Medea went under the bleachers.

And then she led us even further under the bleachers so no one would see. I was walking up to a side, so I did not glance the incipience of the event.

“Hey, let me see!”

I step over and put my face up directly to the event, brushing a lock of Medea’s hair from her cheek. I remember the tops and bottoms of their lips juxtaposed, Medea’s on top toward the right I think. Medea’s mouth concealed Jamie’s a little off to the side. I remember thinking to myself, that very moment, if I ever wanted to recall this moment, I should think of their faces, of Jaime and Medea’s faces joined together at the lips. But I suspected there was no tongue play, and that’s what the deal was for. As soon as they concluded their finale with a flattening of their mouths and a peck of their lips that seemed to “pop” I say:

“No,”

“What!”

“No, I’m not satisfied that was a tongue kiss, so I’m not going to streak,”

A look of the most profound disbelief spread over their faces. As we walked past the gate back into the field proper, our former circumstances were reversed. They two were bewildered, and I surprisingly confident, with a **big** smile on my face. My mind was all aflutter. Oh, yeah, that’s right, I went there – aflutter. There was Machiavellian pride – “Ha, I tricked them into doing that!” Legalistic argument – “I’m still not convinced they tongue kissed, therefore I have no obligation to fulfill the contract” Epicurean delight – “Duuuddde, Sweeet! That’s like the most erotic experience of my life, isn’t it” and finally, Hegelian dialectic – “If I had done that, it would of broken Mothers heart. And on this, the day my Grandmother got hurt” which brings me up to Guilt. “While your Grandma is lying in a hospital you do this!”

I was pained about that last point for a long time. All I can say is that Grandmother recovered from her fall surprisingly well, and I had not purposed the kiss very confidant of success. (I had never *planned* to disrespect Grandma, things just got out of hand) I also felt I could atone my sin by making it a piece of literature, as I atoned for what I saw in Chicago by my presence at the Powder Puff.

Whatever else happened that night could only have been a postlogue, no matter how exciting. Though I felt the episode with Medea and Jaime more than satisfied my criteria for a successful night, as the game wore down, I became concerned about the lack of wam. Apparently the element, so misused in Chicago, was absent altogether from our version of the ritual. So I thought a little practical joke might be in order.

I was fortunate enough to procure an orphan bottle of red Gatorade or something, and thus commenced the hunt for the most appropriate victim; as it turned out, this turned out to be Artemis. She was leaning on the field side of the gate that bordered the field, and around which we had been congregating. I signaled to Achilles what I was about to do for I would have never despoiled her without his consent. Fortunately, he nodded his head with enthusiasm.

Thus I proceeded to come upon my unknowing pray. She was caught completely

unawares, as cold red liquid started pouring on her head. Artemis seemed to take it pretty well, but an adjacent bystander was apparently upset about some side effects of my prank on his arm.

“What the hell was that? Piss?!”

This fellow was apparently from another school. He was also two times bigger than me, and built like an athlete. Yep, I had reason to worry.

“Hey man, it was just juice... it, it was just a joke! Come on!”

“What the hell are you doing?! What the fuck do you think you’re doing, ha?! Why did you spill shit on my shirt, punk?!”

Perhaps moved by his eloquence a crowd began to gather round us. He began to push me, or attempt to at every sentence.

“Hey, I’m sorry a little juice got on your shirt, but really it was just a little prank aimed at Artemis there. Hey, Artemis!”

I began to get worried that this might turn out to be another Chicago. After all that effort not to get embarrassed, this happens anyway. A bit of ironic humor there; I usually enjoy ironic humor, but not now. Just then Achilles jumped the gate, followed by several others of his group to plead with him, in their own special way.

“Leave him alone!” Achilles cried.

“Just take your shirt and leave!” another interjected.

Achilles and his friends were athletes, a high echelon in the high school class structure I had long ignored. (Note to the future: despite what you might see on *Dawson’s Creek*, only those with a stake in the “class structure,” or who are desperate to have one, ever really think about it). Outnumbered three to two, not counting my little P. E. alternative ass, the strangers backed down, and the crowd slowly dispersed. Though I had a brief, but incredibly apprehensive, visit from the campus officer and assistant principal, I got off spot free.

During the drive home from the Powder Puff, I felt immense relief, and enormous gratitude. Achilles must really like me if he would do that to help me out. It really made me feel good that all those people came in to help. How couldn’t I be flattered? But despite my relaxed bliss, Mom was frenziedly worried.

“What if that guy shows up again? What if he shows up at graduation, and takes you by surprise? Now I have to worry about this!”

She *actually* said that. I told her I had never seen that guy before, would likely never see him again and that there’s nothing to be afraid of. Eventually she calmed down and told me how the last *Buffy* went.

IX.

End with a bang.

i.

Despite my audience with Jaime and Medea, I still thought that my journeys needed a climax. Though everything in the past few months could be written off as rambling coincidence, or answers to nightly prayers, it seemed as if somehow it formed a coherent whole, almost like a plot. I had begun seriously thinking about writing it as a short story (and got so damn long, it ended up becoming a novella) but if I was going to

make it into one, I needed an ending, something to tie the story together. But before I could write anything, I would have to live it first.

What most concerned me presently, then, was my doubt that Medea and Jaime tongue kissed. At the time it happened I sincerely did not think they did it, but as time passed I became more conflicted. There was only one way I could know the truth about what happened, and it was about a week before I saw her again.

“I’m pissed off at you right now,” Medea said with surprisingly little malice.

“What did he do?” asked a curious voice from the front of the back CMC room.

“Oh, I tricked her into kissing a girl,” I never tire of recounting my chivalric deeds.

But Mrs. Narcissus broke up the meeting, and it was only later that I was able to question her fully about the incident.

“Pppppppppsssssss, Medea,”

“Yeah,”

“I have to know, did you really tongue kiss Jaime?”

“Yes,” She smiled.

“Was that the first time you ever kissed a girl?” I only asked because I realize turning her into a bisexual might count against me as a sin.

“Oh, no. I’ve done it lots of times. I like it”

I knew there was an even chance she was lying, but what she said aroused me so, I just ignored the possibility. Plus I was off the hook for turning her gay. She sauntered off in her tight fitting sweatshirt, and short shorts that drove me crazy. I thought I had last seen her for the day, possibly forever, but then something happened that would set the plot off into a wholly unexpected direction.

As it happened I was spending my last period of the day working as a student aide in the library, when out of the corner of my eye what should appear but Medea and one of her cohorts, lounging about in our eight tiny cushion chairs. Man, I’d been working too long. Medea seemed excited to see me.

“Chiron!” she cried as soon as her eyes met mine. “Come over here,”

“Sure, just let me finish putting these books up,” for I realized while on duty there can be no...no, no I not going to rhyme that.

Whence I had finally the chance to come hither to her chair, her friend did inquire how we “played” with each other.

“Oh, yeah, I have to do anything she tells me to, but she doesn’t give me that many orders,” I looked droopy eyed toward Medea.

“Get down on your knees and tell me, you love me, now!”

I happily obliged, going back to the level I was the first time we played, but this inevitably precipitated yet another round of *quid pro quo*, a game I was growing ever more weary of. In my heart of hearts, I knew what was going to happen, but I was so one minded, I just ignored whatever contradicted my prospective outcome. She demanded the rematch as compensation for what happened at the Powder Puff. And she had a quid ready: the intimate garment. But I supplied the quo, something I knew I could get away with, relatively easily.

“You know, I think I accidentally put on my brothers pants today, they’re much

wider than mine and are liable fall off any time,” This was true, sometimes the only thing that kept my brothers pants on was the force of will.

“Ok, come out on the courtyard when the bell rings, you have to drop your pants. And I have to see you do it. And then, I promise you one of my intimate garments,” After a little more friendly conversation, she left us to attend her own student aide duties. Somehow I had the feeling this was not going to be cool. I turned to the friend:

“Do you think she’ll really do it?” I ask solemnly, for I had known this one since freshman year, and trusted him to give it to me straight.

“Oooh yeah,” he assured, “Besides if she doesn’t, I get you one”

“I’ll hold you to that.”

With such a money back guarantee, how could I refuse? Still, I felt a deep sense of foreboding when I heard the shrill cry of the school bell. I took a deep breath and carried myself out on to the schoolyard, which was really just the cemented plaza in the midst of four school buildings.

“Hey, Artemis,” I saw Artemis walking out from class, harried from the long day of study.

“I’m really sorry about spilling that on you at the Powder Puff, it was just a prank,”

“Oh, it’s OK, my fatigues didn’t get wet,” she was all excited about joining the Marines.

“Would you sign my book?”

“Sure,”

I had gotten everybody I had ever talked to at school to sign my yearbook. Medea was the first and her inscription proved rather ironic -- she told me to give Jaime a kiss. Not kidding. While Artemis was occupied with my book, I went thither up the schoolyard, past the place I got the first kiss selling doughnuts, to fulfill my contractual obligations. It took just a second. I had to turn my waist a little bit. Apply pressure to my pockets so very subtlety and...

“Oops,”

A small wave of tired mirth arises from the crowd, but in the same moment I am already pulling my drawers up.

“These are so damn loose!” I felt a cuss word in my excuse would increase their respect for me. I got my pants back on and went over to Artemis who apparently was ignorant of the whole episode.

“Here you go,”

“Thanks, hey I’ll call you,” she had put her phone number down.

“Cool,” she walked away.

As soon as Artemis had gone a vice principal came up to me.

“What just happened here?”

“Oh, well, these pants are loose, they’re my brothers and I, uh, lost a bet,”

“What are you supposed to get out of this?”

“Some girl’s bra,” She grimaced.

“You’re that doughnut guy, aren’t you?”

“Yeah, I guess I do this kinda stuff, because, you know, I’ve never really been noticed around school much, or gotten many dates... and I’m about to graduate, you

know, and people kind of give you license during this period, and uh, it's a last hurrah you know,"

"Please, please, don't do anything at graduation, a girl mooned the audience last year and almost got the principle fired."

"Oh, I won't, I want to get my diploma"

She let me move on, without further comment.

ii.

Now I really needed absolution. After doing something like that, one becomes obliged by one's very sense of dignity to affirm it 'twas in good faith. Where was this overwhelming sense of dignity before I let my drawers down I know not, but still the need for affirmation was more material than ever. As usual, it was to be some time before I could loiter in Medea's presence again. And when I say loiter, I am not being poetic.

Mrs. Narcissus had gotten wise to the connection between myself and Medea, at least to a degree, and felt it would be more harmonious for CMC, and herself, if she put Medea in the front room, while I was exiled to the backroom. She thought this would deter communications between us, and thus lead to a more laborious attitude all around. She had failed to comprehend the scope of my ambition.

Despite all this obstructionism, I would not be deterred or made to desist. I made a number of trips to the front room to get things I didn't really need, in order to solicit Medea, whisperingly, on the way back. Finally, the other boys seated amongst her asked what it was I was so intent on collecting. Whence I had informed them, they instinctually began pressuring her to comply. Medea began smiling again, the kind of smile women make when they don't really want to do something, and rested an uplifted foot on to the ground, thereby lowering her whole body.

"OK"

"Jonathan! What are you doing?"

"Uh, just talking to Medea, Mrs. Narcissus,"

"You should be working on your..." to tell you the truth I don't remember what it was.

"Yes, Mrs. Narcissus," and I went back into the back room. I waited at the table to see what would be the nature of Mrs. Narcissus' next reprimand.

"Chiron, I know you like this girl, but if you do this a little bit more, it's going to count as harassment,"

"I don't think that would hold. Did she tell you what I was asking her for?"

"No..."

"It was for her underwear. She promised me an 'intimate garment' if I dropped trow in the courtyard a few days ago, and I did. So now I'm just trying to collect,"

She looked dumbfounded.

"You see at the Powder Puff, I got her to kiss another girl. It was a *quid pro quo* if I would streak across the field, which of course I didn't do. And we did it this time as a do over,"

“Chiron, how stupid could you be,”

“I know,”

“Of course she was going to double cross you, as revenge. How could you not see that? And what if you had streaked across the field? You wouldn’t be able to walk the stage; you might have been arrested....”

Referring to the Sapphic kiss “What if someone saw you? You could have gone down for sexual harassment. Think about your future.”

This was before Brittany-Madonna, who were just ripping off T.A.T.U., when that kind of thing was more arcane. Now it’s just trendy.

I sat and thought about what she said. In a way it was true. Wasn’t I just grabbing at straws? Wasn’t this just some kind of puerile quest? Achieve one thing, stop caring about it, start another quest. Never happy, never settled. The brief camaraderie I shared with a few of my male cohorts was not friendship. The encounters I had with Medea and the doughnut girls, and Eris were not love, they were even hardly lust. What, if anything, had I accomplished in my journeys. That voice came back again.

Experience, for one thing. Everybody has some point in their life when they have fun. Why couldn’t this be yours? Love? What love? Do you honestly think that you’ll find the love of your life in high school, a few months before graduation? Did you honestly think you were searching for love when you started selling doughnuts, or started playing with Medea? No, you wanted to do that because you are a man, well a male anyway, and you have not succeeded sexually for your entire high school career; anxious, you have acted out now, out of fear of being left behind. And sociability, in the original meaning of the word? You were afraid of being dismissed or ignored by your fellow man, the worst possible condition anyone can be in. But unpopularity does not mean antipathy, for in your journeys many have considered you, and shown genuine care for you, and that, empathy, compassion, is the greatest gift any man could ever give, or hope to receive. Go take the adventures you have already gotten, but always remember that all you could hope to obtain in your quest is temporal, worldly satisfactions.

That really belittled any further ambitions I had. No matter what my status with Medea, it was only a temporary status anyway. I was looking for the right thing in the wrong place. The bell rang, and I exited to go to lunch, I think. In the hallway leading out to the courtyard, I encountered Medea once more.

“Is there anything I can do for you, Milady?”

I held the door open for her and held her heavy books one last time. And I did bug her for one last trophy -- a kiss. Just one last kiss from her, or some substitute, was all I needed. One last thing from her to cap my erotic quest.

“Hey, what are you doing to my girlfriend?” Jaime walked past us.

“I’ll kiss her for you,” She went up and tapped Jaime on the shoulder. They smooched their lips together, and I saw what could have been affection pass between their eyes. But I knew better, it was probably only joyful spontaneity. It still wasn’t what I was after though – *I* needed to do something. She walked over to a black friend of hers to

discuss something. As they conversed I couldn't help but notice her firm, perfectly rounded buttocks, perking out from her posterior. I knew what it was I must to do. Luckily, I had more than necessary assistance from one of her girlfriends. A short, almost miniature version of Medea's ilk strode up after the black guy had departed.

"Hey, Medea! What's ya up to?" And then she grabbed her ass.

"Oh like that. Do ya?" She kept her fingers squarely on Medea's butt. For her part, Medea just stood there with a slight smile, like some sort of lesbian sow.

"Yeah, I do like it. In fact, I think I'll take a little myself,"

As I say this turned over to Medea's side, and for one brief shining moment, caressed her warm cushion of flesh. Ecstasy.

"What are you doing?" She holds me at arm's length, grinning, but angry.

"Oh, I just had to get something to remember you by," I sauntered off, walking on cloud nine. Whence I returned to the backroom of CMC I informed Mrs. Narcissus that Medea had repaid me, and that I would cease to be obsessed with her for the time being. She declined to be informed of how I secured payment. When I got back to my desk, I couldn't concentrate on my work. Visions of the days, of the months events started to crowd my mind. There was something I could do to release this, but that's so uncouth, so low classed. Aaaaa, but it would only be this one time, because you needed to do it, and it's better than practically raping your desk, as presently.

"Mrs. Narcissus, can I go to the bathroom?"

As fate would have it, I arrived in the very same stall I had used in my desperation, but now in elation. I rationalized my circumstances. Everybody must do this once in their lives, I suppose. Everybody at some point in their lives is allowed just a little license.

THE END